

# NEWS NOTES JANUARY 2003

## **NEWS FROM THE CO-CHAIRS:**

Our appreciation is extended to **Georgetta Stonewall** for her three years of service to the Program Administrative Support Task Group for representing the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research. Georgetta was instrumental in maintaining the SOP manual, the mentoring program and was invaluable in coordinating the 2001 Area Secretarial meeting. Please join us in thanking her for her service and wishing her well in her new position as Contracting Specialist for the Midwest Area.

## **NEW PASTG MEMBER:**

**Brittney Mernick**, will be representing the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Peoria, IL. Her bio is located under “Changing Faces”.

## **REMEMBER:**

--Go through files, disposing of materials that may be discarded, and do a general “house-cleaning” of computer files and general files.

--Mid-January: Submit documentation of Cat. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 accomplishments, appraisal and award forms to Center or Area Director.

--Be sure all Cat. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 employees have performance standards and IDPs in place for the coming year.

## **CHANGING FACES:**

**Mindy Barber**, Secretary of the Air Quality of Agricultural Systems Research Unit, National Soil Tilth Laboratory, in Ames, IA. Mindy joined ARS in January 1998 as an Office Automation Clerk. Before ARS, she worked at a local hospital in a variety of departments, such as Pre-Admissions, Emergency Room, and First Admitting. She is looking forward to the challenges of her new position.

**Thomas Evans**, Office Automation Assistant, Center Directors Office, National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Peoria, IL. Retired from the U.S. Army with job experience in both personnel and logistics areas, Tom is the father of three children and the grandfather of four. After traveling around the

country for the past 20 years he enjoys spending as much time as possible with his family.

**Dianna Halcumb**, Secretary of the Microbial Genomics and Bioprocessing Research Unit, National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Peoria, IL. Diana spent several years working with the Navy (including duty in the Caribbean and Great Britain). She moved to Peoria about four years ago with her three daughters, Leah, Danielle, and Rachel, and their three cats and hamster. She enjoys gardening, photography, crocheting, reading, enjoying the outdoors whenever possible, spending time with her friends, and is very active in her church.

**Karen Hughes**, Office Automation Assistant, National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Peoria, IL. Prior to coming to ARS Karen was employed by ROHN Manufacturing in Peoria for 18 years holding the position of Project Manager for the Construction Group. Karen is married with one son. She enjoys the lazy days of summer boating and jet skiing with family and friends.

**Brittney Mernick**, Secretary of the Food and Industrial Oils Unit, National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Peoria, IL. Brittney worked as a Physical Science Aid since 1998 at the Center while pursuing her Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism, Bradley University. Brittney enjoys reading, sewing, scrap booking, singing and playing the cello.

**Wyvonne (Kit) Mernick**, Secretary of the Cereal Products and Food Sciences Research Unit, National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Peoria, IL. She has her bachelor's degree in Business Management from the University of Illinois, Springfield. Prior to coming to ARS she was employed at a non-profit organization as Business Manager. Kit is married and the mother of two children. She enjoys working in the yard and maintaining her Koi pond.

**Cris Nass**, Office Automation Clerk, North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station, Ames, IA. After living in Naperville, Illinois almost her whole life she decided to move to Ames, Iowa to be closer to family and to enjoy small town living. Before coming to NCRPIS she worked in a variety of different office settings including interior design, workers compensation, and real estate.

**Becky Roland**, Secretary of the Soil and Water Quality Research Unit, National Soil Tilth Laboratory, Ames, IA. She previously worked with a large health insurer in Colorado for many years and her last position included controlling a large inventory of forms on a central website, as well as trouble-shooting orders placed on that website and handling training duties. Returning to Iowa in 2001, she worked as a documentation writer in a manufacturing firm before joining the NSTL staff.

**Pamela Stewart**, Secretary of the Agricultural Land & Watershed Management Unit, National Soil Tilth Laboratory in Ames, IA. Previously, Pam was a member of the Administrative Support Team as an Office Automation Clerk and Office Automation Assistant. She has also worked as the Office Manager of a local church and a cosmetologist.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

- \$ Ctrl + W will close the annoying pop-up advertising screens on the Internet.
- \$ **www.google.com/unclesam** is a U.S. government search engine. You can find just about anything concerning the government via this engine.
- \$ There is now a website to access for information about which countries we should not send correspondence without special permission.
  - Access **www.treas.gov/ofac**
  - Select “Sanctions Program and Country Summaries” located in the Content directory.
  - Locate the country on the list.
  - Note that some countries have both “Overview of Sanctions” and “Guidelines and Information.”
  - Select the information you want and it will open in Adobe Acrobat Reader

## **UPDATE:**

As you are aware, standardized performance elements for the secretarial series are being developed for implementation in the Midwest Area. We are awaiting final approval from the Area Directors= office and expect that these will be applied during the next performance rating cycle. Please make sure that you have current standards in place so that you may be rated at the appropriate time. All standards must be in place for 90 days with a rating and reviewing official's signature in order to be rated for this performance year. As additional information is received from the Area, we will keep you posted.

**Happy New Year!**